Castlemaine Naturalist

November 2024

Vol. 49.10 #536

Monthly newsletter of the Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club Inc.
ISSN 2982-2165

Pitt Island Shag – endemic to the Chatham Islands
Photo: Euan Moore

Island Birds

The highs and the lows, with an emphasis on the New Zealand Bioregion

Our October meeting was a joint meeting with Birdlife Castlemaine District with the talk being presented by Euan Moore.

Islands are home to a great diversity of species across all kingdoms of the natural world with many species being unique to just one, or to a small group of islands. The talk started with a brief summary of how islands form, volcanism and tectonic uplift, sea level changes and continental drift being the main mechanisms. New Zealand is the above-water area of a continental plate (Zealandia) which separated from Gondwanaland some 90mya. The NZ biogeographic region extends from Macquarie Is. in the south to Norfolk and Kermadec Islands in the north. There are also strong affinities with New Caledonia which is also part of this continental plate.

We then moved on to how species reach islands. Some may be original occupants who were isolated as the island separated from a larger land mass. The remainder of species only reach islands if they can either swim or fly. This results in a very different mix of species on islands compared to continental land masses. In the case of New Zealand only 20% of species known to have been present since 1000CE are passerines compared to Australia where approximately 50% of species are passerines.

Birds had already evolved when Zealandia split from Gondwanaland with some of those already present evolving into distinct endemic families. These included the NZ Wattlebirds (Kokako and Saddleback) and the NZ Wrens (Rifleman and Rock Wren) as well as several families of mega-fauna.

Sea birds are always prominent on islands. Birds such as albatross and shearwaters often nest on islands and frequently have very limited breeding grounds. For example, the Chatham Albatross breed on a single island with an area

of approx. 9Ha. Such restricted breeding ranges mean that many island species are vulnerable to threats to their survival.

Islands in the New Zealand bioregion are home to a diverse array of sea birds including 13 species of cormorant, 14 of 20 species of albatross plus c65 species of petrels, shearwaters, etc. Fourteen of the 18 species of penguin have been recorded with most breeding in the region.

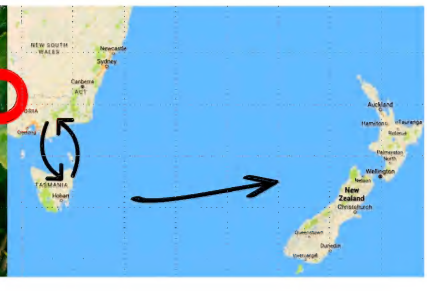
There is a similar array of migratory birds as found in Australia with both breeding and non-breeding migrants. Rare migrants from the American flyway turn up in NZ more frequently than in Australia.

With the arrival of the Māori c1200CE came the Kiore or Polynesian rat. At that time there were around 263 extant bird species in NZ. Over the following 600 years 27 species became extinct although their remains are known from middens and other archeological sites. These included most of the mega-fauna (Moa, 9 species, Adzebill, 2 species, NZ Goose, 2 species) which succumbed to hunting. Smaller birds such as some of the NZ wrens were predated on by the Kiore. The giant Haast's Eagle, weighing up to 14kg, preyed on Moa and other flightless birds and died out from loss of prey.

The arrival of the Pakeha (European settlers) from the early 1800s caused a second major environmental change. Early sailors introduced rats (unintentionally), pigs and goats (intentionally) to many of the smaller remote and offshore islands. Following the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, British settlers introduced dozens of plants, mammals and invertebrates as well as initiating land-clearing for agriculture. Later acclimatisation societies with the ironic, in hindsight, aim to "*To naturalise all kinds of new species — as long as they had no harmful effect.*" introduced rabbits, stoats, hedgehogs, brushtail possums, deer and wallabies amongst others. A total of 33 species of mammal and 37 birds were introduced over a century from the 1860s along with many more unsuccessful introductions.

This was/is the second major wave of extinctions with a further 24 bird species being lost up until the present day.

The changes brought about by human settlement enabled self-colonisation by many species that up until now had not found suitable habitat. One of the earliest of these was the Silvereye (Māori name Tauhau = stranger) that arrived around 1856. The race in NZ is the Tasmanian race. It is likely that a storm during the spring or autumn migration resulted in many birds being blown out to sea with some reaching New Zealand. There have been approximately 17 recent arrivals including Masked Lapwing, Pied Stilt, White-faced Heron and Royal Spoonbill. This is a continuing natural process and the numbers becoming established will increase over time.



In recent years there have been some positive stories which give cause for hope. The NZ Storm Petrel was rediscovered after being lost for almost 150 years. Numbers may have increased after rats were eradicated from its breeding island. The Chatham Island Taiko (Magenta Petrel) was missing for 110 years and the Takahe, the last of the mega-fauna birds, was not seen for 50 years until rediscovered in 1948. Feral animal control since the 1960s has rid more than 100 of the smaller islands of invasive mammals enabling endemic species to recover on these islands. Predator-proof fences have been used to create mainland sanctuaries which have also helped endangered species. Some of these sanctuaries and islands are open to the public and provide an opportunity to see some of these charismatic species.

More recently Predator Free 2050 has been set up with government funding plus the ability to accept private donations that are also partly matched by the government. This ambitious program, which involves the community at all levels as well as government and private enterprise, aims to rid the main islands of some of the major threats to native wildlife including stoats, rats and brushtail possums.

The talk ended with the question 'Are they really extinct?' and gave some examples of birds that have not been seen for a considerable time but may still be hanging on in some remote location.

Euan Moore

CFNC excursion report, 19 October 2024

On Saturday 19 October on a beautiful sunny afternoon, following very welcome soaking rain in the previous 24 hours, we had the rare treat of visiting a private property in Walmer. Our hosts were Lynne and Ricci Bernardi and our excursion leader was local plant guru Ian Higgins. Ian had suggested the property for an excursion in the knowledge that it had unusually rich biodiversity, and he was proved right. In just two hours, strolling across just part of the property, we identified 75 different plant species, as well as 19 different bird species.

The property is an important site not just for its diversity, but also for a number of species that are under threat or not commonly found in our district. Right at the start of our walk we were surrounded by Annual Everlastings (*Chrysocephalum vitellinum*), which VicFlora lists as being scattered through our region, but we have not yet included it in Castlemaine Flora. Then, as we started to stroll down what at first appeared to be 'just' a grassy slope, Ian pointed out that it was full of orchids, including Sun Orchids in bud (probably *Thelymitra megcalyptra*, Scented Sun Orchid, and/or *Thelymitra pauciflora*, Slender Sun Orchid), Onion Orchids (*Microtis sp.*) and the rare little Sutton Grange Greenhood (*Pterostylis agrestis*), which many of us, myself included, had not seen before. There was some debate about whether or not they were Swan Orchids (*Pterostylis cycnocephala*), because they are very similar plants, but the revealing feature of the Sutton Grange Orchid is a dark patch at the base of the labellum, whereas the Swan Orchid has a dark triangular patch at the tip of the labellum.

The site is one of the few places where Bitter Cryptandra (*Cryptandra amara*) is in good numbers in the district, however elsewhere they are threatened by deer

browsing, so its future is not assured. We saw good numbers of the plant, still in flower but past their best. When in its prime the flowers are pure white.

A highlight was a sighting of the rare Southern Swainson-pea (*Swainsona behriana*), with one plant in flower. According to the information provided in Castlemaine Flora, early descriptions of the Ravenswood area vegetation included Swainson-peas by the thousands, however the combined effect of habitat loss and sheep and rabbits has resulted in almost total extinction of the species. This prompted Ian to talk about harvesting the seeds of these plants for propagation and repopulating of suitable sites.

Everyone will have a highlight or two from the excursion. There was some excitement about two 'red' species, Red Parrot-pea (*Dillwynia hispida*) and Scarlet Sundew (*Drosera glanduligera*). Both of these species are uncommon in our district. Another plant triggered some debate as to whether it was a lobelia or an isotome. Post-excursion investigation found it to be an isotome, Swamp Isotome (*Isotoma fluviatilis*).

The property is not without its challenges, of course. It abuts farmland and therefore is encroached on by non-native plants, it has its share of rabbits and deer have been seen. Of particular concern is the appearance of the invasive South African Weed Orchid (*Disa bracteata*). Once established this weed is almost impossible to eradicate, but Lynne and Ricci are giving it a good shot. We also helped in a (very) small way by removing any plants we saw. Each plant produces tens of thousands of dust-like seeds that are spread by wind. The plants have to be removed with their underground tubers intact or they will regrow.

We concluded the afternoon with an informal discussion with Lynne and Ricci about what had prompted them to buy the property, how they manage it and what their aspirations are for the land. Suffice to say that it is in excellent hands, and it was very generous of them to allow us to examine the incredible array of plants.

Cathrine Harboe-Ree

Clockwise from left:
Sutton Grange Greenhood (*Pterostylis agrestis*)
Red Parrot-pea (*Dillwynia hispida*)
Swamp Isotome (*Isotoma fluviatilis* ssp *australis*)
Bitter Cryptandra (*Cryptandra amara*)

Photos by Cathrine Harboe-Ree

Plant List

Scientific name	Common name	Scientific name	Common name
Acacia genistifolia	Spreading Wattle	*Acacia gunnii*	Ploughshare Wattle
Acacia implexa	Lightwood	*Acacia paradoxa*	Hedge Wattle
Acacia provincialis	Inland Wirilda Wattle	*Acacia pycnantha*	Golden Wattle
Acacia verniciflua	Varnish Wattle	*Acaena agnifila*	Hairy Sheep's Burrs
Acaena echinata	Common Sheep's Burrs	*Acrotiche serrulata*	Honeypots
Arthropodium strictum	Chocolate Lily	*Austrostipa scabra ssp. falcata*	Rough Spear-grass
Bossiaea prostrata	Creeping Bossiaea	*Brachyloma daphnoides*	Daphne Heath
Brunonia australis	Blue Pincushion	*Bulbine bulbosa*	Bulbine Lily
Burchardia umbellata	Milkmaids	*Bursaria spinosa*	Sweet Bursaria
Chrysocephalum apiculatum	Common Everlasting	*Chrysocephalum vitellinum*	Annual Everlasting
Cryptandra amara	Bitter Cryptandra	*Daviesia ulicifolia ssp. ruscifolia*	Gorse Bitter-pea
Dianella rovoluta var. revoluta	Black-anther Flax-lily	*Dillwynia cinerascens*	Grey Parrot-pea
Dillwynia hispida	Red Parrot-pea	*Dillwynia sericea*	Showy Parrot-pea
Diuris behrii	Golden Cowslips (finished flowering)	*Drosera auriculata*	Tall Sundew
Drosera glanduligera	Scarlet Sundew	*Drosera gunniana*	Pale Sundew
Eucalyptus macrorhyncha	Red Stringybark	*Eucalyptus microcarpa*	Grey Box
Eucalyptus polyanthemos	Red Box	*Genocarpus tetragynus*	Rough Raspwort
Geranium sp		*Goodenia paradoxa*	Spur Goodenia
Hackelia suaveolens	Sweet Hound's-tongue	*Hibbertia crinita*	Hoary Guinea-flower
Hydrocotyle laxiflora	Stinking Pennywort		
Hackelia suaveolons	Sweet Hound's-Tongue	*Hypericum gramineum*	Small St John's Wort
Isotoma fluviatilis ssp australis	Swamp Isotome	*Kennedia prostrata*	Running Postman
Leptorhynchos squamatus	Scaly Buttons	*Leptorhynchos tenuifolius*	Wiry Buttons
Leptospermum myrsinoides	Heath Tea-tree	*Lissanthe strigosa*	Peach Heath
Luzula meridionalis	Common Woodrush	*Lythrum hyssopifolia*	Small Loosestrife
Melichrus urceolatus	Urn Heath	*Microlaena stipoides*	Weeping Grass
Microtis sp	Onion Orchid	*Myriophyllum crispatum*	Upright Water-milfoil
Pelargonium rodneyanum	Magenta Stork's-bill	*Pimelia curviflora*	Curved Rice-flower
Pimelia humilis	Dwarf Rice-flower	*Poa sieberiana*	Grey Tussock-grass
Pterostylis agrestis	Sutton Grange Greenhood	*Pultenaea laxiflora*	Loose-flower Bush-pea
Rumex brownii	Slender Dock	*Schoenus apogen*	Common Bog-sedge
Solenogyne dominii	Smooth Solenogyne	*Stackhousia monogyna*	Creamy Candles
Stylidium graminifolium	Grass Trigger-plant	*Styphelia humifusa*	Cranberry Heath
Swainsona behriana	Southern Swainson-pea	*Tetratheca ciliata*	Pink Bells
Thelymitra sp.	Sun Orchid (Buds)	*Themeda triandra*	Kangaroo Grass

Triptilodiscus pygmaeus	Common Sunray	*Vellereophyton dealbatum*	White Cudweed
Wahlenbergia	Bluebell	*Wurmbea dioica*	Common Early Nancy
Xerochrysum viscosum	Sticky Everlasting		

Bird list

Australian Magpie, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Brown Falcon, Brown-headed Honeyeater, Galah, Grey Butcherbird, Grey Fantail, Grey Shrikethrush, Horsefield's Bronze-cuckoo, Little Raven, Red Wattlebird, Rufus Whistler, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Superb Fairywren, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Weebill, White-plumed Honeyeater, White-winged Triller, Yellow-faced Honeyeater.

Wednesday Wildflower Wander

along Youngman's Track 25 September 2024

An encouraging number of members and visitors joined us for the final WWW this year. We noted the variable impacts of the planned burn carried out in April - in some places, it seemed to have been quite cool, at others the ground seemed burnt with the taller trees showing burn marks well up their trunks [Fig. 1]. We stopped first at the junction with Escape Track, where in recent years there have been good displays of Small Gnat Orchids in flower – not this year, just a few leaves. The other stop was at the end of Youngman's Track where is meets Reilly Track. The hillside of Dusty Miller was past peak flowering but was admired by many in the group. None of the greenhood orchids seen in past years were recorded. Many of the Goldfields Grevillea leaves were showing the infestation [Fig 2] noticed in recent years – some had been killed in the fire. New growth emerging from lightly burnt ground included Grey Everlasting [Fig 3] and a standout Chocolate Lily [Fig 4]. Dry leaves fallen since the planned burn were already covering the ground.

The Plant List may be missing some sightings not reported to me. Thanks to Beth Mellick for the list of mosses that she identified.

Peter Turner

Fig 1

Fig 2

Fig 3

Fig 4

Plant List for Youngman's Track Wildflower Wander 25 September 2024

Common Name	Scientific Name	Comments
Pink Fingers	*Caladenia carnea*	
Leopard Orchid	*Diuris pardina*	1 or 2 in flower still
Wax-lip Orchid	*Glossodia major*	A few
Small Gnat Orchid	*Cyrtostylis reniformis*	A few leaves - no flowers
Chocolate Lily	*Arthropodium strictum*	One in full bloom
Billy Buttons	*Craspedia variabilis*	A few
Yam Daisy	*Microseris walteri*	A few only
Sticky Everlasting	*Xerochrysum viscosum*	In bud
Creamy Candles	*Stackhousia monogyna*	
Pink Bells	*Tetratheca ciliata*	
Gold-dust Wattle	*Acacia acinacea*	
Rough Wattle	*Acacia aspera*	
Gorse Bitter-pea	*Daviesia ulicifolia* subsp *ruscifolia*	Extensive
White Marianth	*Rhytidosporum procumbens*	
Daphne Heath	*Brachyloma daphnoides*	
Goldfields Grevillea	*Grevillea dryophylla*	Many showing leaf attack
Downy Grevillea	*Grevillea alpina*	Red colour morphs.
Dusty Miller	*Spyridium parvifolium*	Past full flowering
Fairy Wax-flower	*Philotheca verrucosa*	Many
Slender Rice-flower	*Pimelea linifolia*	
Grey Everlasting	*Ozothamnus obcordatus*	

Mosses:

Triquetrella papillata	*Rosulabryum sp.*	*Bryum argenteum*
Campylopus introflexus	*Dawsonia longiseta*	*Polytrichum juniperinum*

From the Committee

One of our achievements this year has been the upgrade of information about our district's distinctive geological features. There are now two resources on the website. One is the revised *Geological Features of the Castlemaine District* brochure, which you can find from the Explore page of our web site. This brochure has now been supplemented with additional information and photographs to illustrate the various features. This can be found at https://castlemainefieldnaturalists.org.au/geological-features-of-castlemaine-illustrations/. We hope you find this information useful and take the time to investigate our local geology. Thanks to Euan Moore, Jenny Rolland and Noel Young for producing this material.

And we are pleased to advise that a revision of the *Indigenous Plants of Castlemaine and Surrounds* brochure (the glossy brochure) is now with the designer, so we are hoping for the new edition to be available by the end of the year. Thanks for this go to many people, but especially Lou Citroën, Cathrine Harboe-Ree and Geraldine Harris.

A number of Committee members actively liaise with DEECA about their planned burns in our district. We, along with other landcare and friends groups, lobby DEECA to argue the case for managing our unique environment as effectively as possible, especially with regard to protection of rare and threatened species.

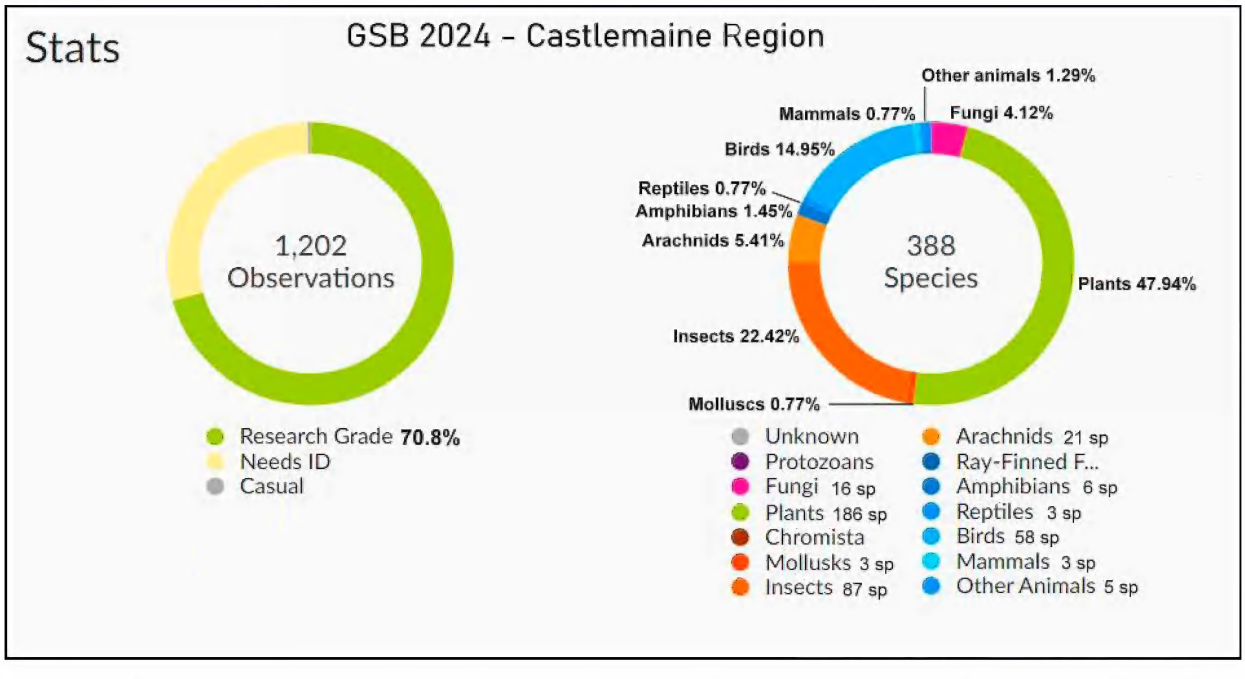
The Great Southern Bioblitz

Mez Woodward

This was the Club's fourth year of contributing to the Great Southern Bioblitz and Club members and other community members put in a great effort, delivering invaluable data for biodiversity records and research. Special events were also again run during the Bioblitz, see the following article.

Numbers of observations and species were less than last year, the dry preceding months taking their toll. It was however very exciting to see many newcomer participants, with the number of observers nearly doubling from 2023. This is exactly what the Bioblitz is all about – encouraging increasing numbers of community members to become citizen scientists, learning about their environment and its biodiversity while contributing to records and research. And of course they get to experience all the challenges, learnings and delights of exploring and discovering some of the tens of thousands of species living in our amazing local country, so many of them unnoticed, unknown and unvalued. It can become quite addictive!

Observations Results: adapted from online iNaturalist analysis
https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/projects/great-southern-bioblitz-2024-castlemaine-region?tab=stats



Unsurprisingly plants were the most frequently observed with pretty Pink Bells (*Tetratheca ciliata*) topping the list. It was pleasing also to see less common species recorded, such as three observers finding the beautiful *Styphelia fletcheri in* flower, not common here and classified as threatened in NSW. Australian Wood Duck (*Chenonetta jubata*), Galah (*Eolophus roseicapilla*) and Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo (*Zonda funerea*) were the most frequently observed birds. Of the insect species, the Southern Moon Moth (*Dasyphodia selenophora*) topped the list, and 37 of all 87 insect species recorded were moths. Another delight was the record of a Superb Ant-eater Spider (*Euriopis umbilicarta*), who lassoes its ant prey with its own silk!

Styphelia fletcheri **Noel Young**

Superb Ant-eater Spider **Brendan Sydes**

Using iNaturalist classification system 12 threatened species were recorded. This included four of our eucalypt species listed globally but not locally but also an Australian Shoveller (*Spatula rhyncotis*), listed as vulnerable in Victoria, and our hero the Powerful Owl (*Ninox strenua*), again with a vulnerable listing in Victoria. Hairy Geebung (*Persoonia rigida*) is listed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List and Goldfields Grevillea (*Grevillea dryophylla)* is listed as endangered in Victoria. Scented Bush-Pea (*Pultenaea graveolens*) likewise but the ID of this one has yet to be confirmed.

Left: Hairy Geebung (*Persoonia rigida*) **Lisa Hewitt**

Right:Goldfields Grevillea (*Grevillea dryophylla)* **Geraldine Harris**

The Great Southern Bioblitz 2024 - the CFNC Activities

In preparation for the GSB 2024, members of the CFNC planned several activities to attract and include community citizen scientists. Initially inspired and driven by Mez Woodward, the first activity was a planned 'Photography Walk' through the Castlemaine Botanical Gardens. This session was not intended as a lesson in photography or technical expertise of the camera but rather how to capture good quality photos which would maximise the accurate identification of subjects when uploaded into iNaturalist. Aided by Peter Turner, Jill Williams, Geraldine Harris and Lou Citroën, thorough planning and technical notes were prepared ready for the Sunday morning. These notes were also made available at subsequent events during the bioblitz.

Euan Moore held an evening 'Beginners Guide to iNaturalist' training session in central Castlemaine. Aimed at educating those new to iNaturalist in the procedures of how to upload photos of their observations into the database, manage their dashboards and further explore around the website. It was also an opportunity to explore how iNaturalist can be used to help monitor habitat restoration works.

Following last year's success, another moth night was held on Friday Sep 20th in the Castlemaine Botanical Gardens This, along with the next activity, was within the bioblitz period (20th-23rd Sept) so that observations would contribute to our Bioblitz effort. We were again very pleased that Steve Williams attended to add his expertise in identifying moth species and understanding their habits. Brendan Sydes along with Euan Moore and Jenny Rolland set up the moth sheets and special UV lights which are the most attractive to moths. It may have been the colder temperature and earlier in the season (mid-September compared with late November) but there were not as many moths as last year. However everyone's favourite was the Southern Moon Moth (*Dasypodia selenophora).* Wandering a little further away from the moth sheets during the evening was rewarding for sighting other night-time insects and spiders.

Some of the moth night attendees with Steve Williams in the centre. *Photo: Jenny Rolland.*

Southern Moon Moth (*Dasypodia selenophora).* *Photo: Jill Williams*

And finally, together with host Newstead Landcare, a very successful 'Bioblitz Afternoon in the Bush' was held on Sunday Sep 22nd. An overwhelming gathering of keen naturalists were invited to team up with local wildlife experts to explore the local sights and sounds of the bush at the Red, White and Blue track. Around 60 attendees split into four groups with each group having the opportunity to explore the bush with our expert leaders and learn from them. Many thanks to Frances Cincotta, Geoff Park, Patrick Kavanagh and Andrew Skeoch for their time and expertise. The afternoon finished with a cuppa and time for a chat.

Afternoon gathering at the RWB mine site. *Photo: Jenny Rolland*

Jill Williams

Annual Challenge Bird Count – 2023 recap and 2024 invitation

Chris Timewell

I invite all naturalists, both bird experts and beginners, to get involved in the Annual Challenge Bird Count for the Castlemaine region on either Saturday 30th November, Sunday 1st December, or a nearby date if you unavailable over both days this weekend.

The Annual Challenge Bird Count (ACBC) commenced more than three decades ago as a fun end-of-year activity for amateur birdwatchers and birding/naturalist groups across Australia. The 'challenge' is to get groups of people to see how many birds they can collectively detect and count within their local area (25km radius) within a calendar day – and always occurring around the first weekend in December. The nation-wide event was originally coordinated by the Bird Observers Club of Australia, and since the merger with RAOU in 2012 it has since been taken over by volunteer representatives of BirdLife Australia (currently Adriana Bianchi and Jack Winterbottom).

The Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club has been part of this event from its earliest days – with our team first coordinated by Ern Perkins, then Chris Morris and now by me. During the COVID years of 2020 and 2021, the whole event was cancelled. We had a small contingent of birdwatchers contribute during the past two years, but still managed to detect 61 species (287 individual birds) and 108 species (1,575 individual birds) during 2022 and 2023, respectively. Details about our 2023 findings were provided in the February 2024 club newsletter.

For 2024, it would be great to have a larger number of CFNC members involved again, as well as contributors from BirdLife Castlemaine and other non-affiliated birders. In addition to the enjoyment, it is also an opportunity to undertake valuable bird surveys in the local area. Rare and unusual species are detected in most years, and it also provides an indicator of local bird health when compared to the findings from past years. Please let me know if you are interested (c_timewell@hotmail.com), and I can send you relevant details. In short:

> The searches need to be conducted within a single calendar day, or part thereof. This is preferable on either Sat 30 Nov or Sun 1 Dec – but can be conducted on a day occurring up to a week on either side.
>
> The bird searches are done in small groups – no less than 2 people, and ideally 3 or more. You can either arrange your own group, or I can help you to join with others to form a group. For less experienced birdwatchers, there will be opportunities to join a group with more experienced birders.
>
> I will help oversee the locations being checked, particularly to avoid double-ups, but also to minimise geographic gaps. It's usually a good approach to visit a mix of habitats within the day – woodlands, wetlands, gardens, paddocks, etc. to get a high variety of bird species.

In 2023, there were 16 teams participating from across Australia and its territories, of which half were from country Victoria. The results from across Australia is summarised in the Table below. In comparison to the past 10 years of sightings through Birdata, our 108 detected species represented 58.7% of the total diversity of bird species that we could have reasonably expected to detect.

Table 1. Summary of bird sightings by Annual Challenge Bird Count teams in 2023

Location	# of species	# of individual birds	% of likely species detected
Horsham	160	7,283	108.8% !!
Mackay (Qld)	148	5,122	98.7%
Latrobe Valley	98	1,604	74.2%
East Gippsland	156	17,969	68.7%
Portland 3	107	2,656	62.2%
Castlemaine	***108***	***1,575***	***58.7%***
Cocos Island	31	438	58.5%
Portland 1	87	2,765	57.2%
Portland 2	96	1,741	56.5%
Mornington Peninsula	104	3,374	51.0%
Christmas Island	24	721	45.3%
Plenty Gorge	70	398	37.8%
Wonga Wetlands	51	314	26.4%
Toora Beach	24	358	19.8%
Warrnambool	54	835	N/A
Bellarine	138	9,080	N/A

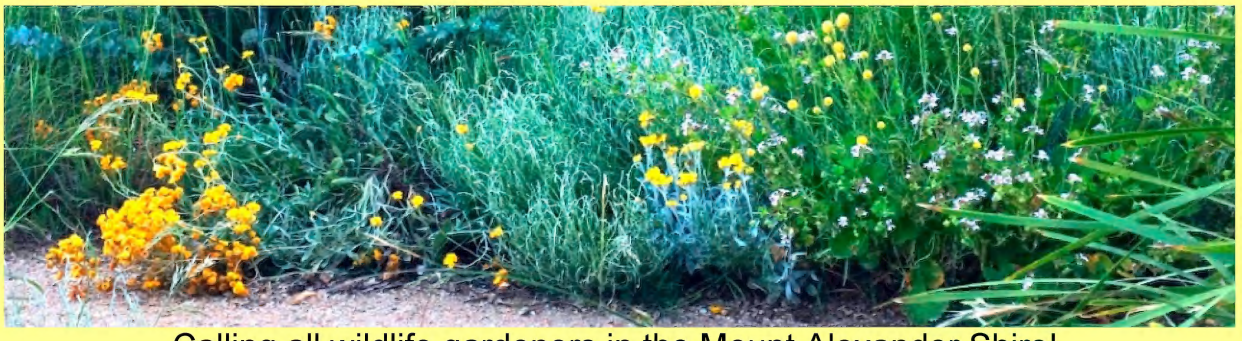
The Field Naturalists' Club of Ballarat warmly invite you to the
46th Annual Stella Bedggood Memorial Lecture
Friday November 1st, 2024 at 7.30pm
Nature Journalling
Come and meet Jane Rusden .....
an artist, nature journaller, birder & printmaker based in Castlemaine.
Jane is an artistic adventurer who loves to hit the road seeking remote natural environments with her small watercolour sketch book, camp stool and camera, collecting impressions of colour, texture, light, interaction and movement. She combines them with intricate details to create breath-taking nature journals and artworks.
Jane will illustrate how the gentle art of nature journalling hones the skill of observation and provides opportunities to notice things we wouldn't normally see. As a creative path to recording species observations, it connects us to the natural world, can be applied to conservation and enriches our wonder of nature.
Venue: Federation University building, corner Gillies St & Gregory St, Wendouree or via Zoom.
Date & Time: 7.30pm, Friday 1st November 2024.
To RSVP or register for the Zoom link, please contact FNCB Secretary Emily Noble via email at: ballaratfnc@gmail.com
A light supper will be provided after the event.
Hot off the press: The newly published second edition of "Discovering Ballarat's Bushland" will be available for purchase (cash) for a special price of $12 (R.R.P. $15).

Advance notice: Members' Night – Friday 13th December 7.30pm

Our final monthly meeting for the year will be our regular and much anticipated end-of-the-year activity – Members' night! This is your chance to tell us about a nature sighting that attracted your attention during the year. If you enjoyed it, so will we. Now is the time to start preparing your short presentation either as photos, a video, a story, an artwork or maybe even a song.

PLANT **SELECTOR**

A plant selection tool for Mount Alexander Shire



Calling all wildlife gardeners in the Mount Alexander Shire!

PLANT **SELECTOR** is your essential tool for choosing indigenous plants that will not only thrive in your garden but also support local wildlife. With expert local plant knowledge at your fingertips, you'll be able to confidently select from 100 native species adapted to the unique conditions of our region. Start growing a garden that meets your needs and benefits nature.

This searchable online tool was created by Dr Cassia Read at the Castlemaine Institute after years of recording ecological and horticultural information about local species suitable for gardens. Local plant experts Frances Cincotta (Newstead Natives) and Ian Higgins (Friends of Campbells Creek) rigorously reviewed the tool and provided local insights. Development of the tool was supported by a Mount Alexander Shire Council Community Grant.

All plants included on the website are found growing naturally across Djandak (Dja Dja Wurrung Country). The work of Dja Dja Wurrung in caring for Djandak over millennia is acknowledged and it is hoped that **PLANT SELECTOR** will support the essential work of healing this upside-down Country.

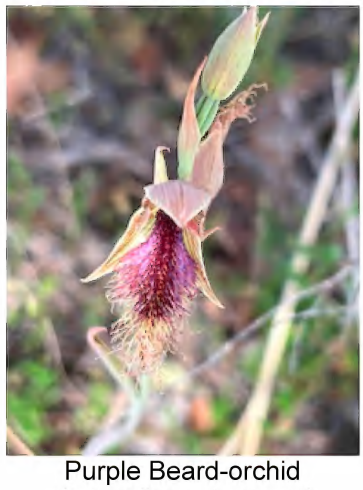
To use this tool, go to: https://ci.org.au/plantselector or scan the QR code.

Supported by a Mount Alexander Shire Council Community Grant

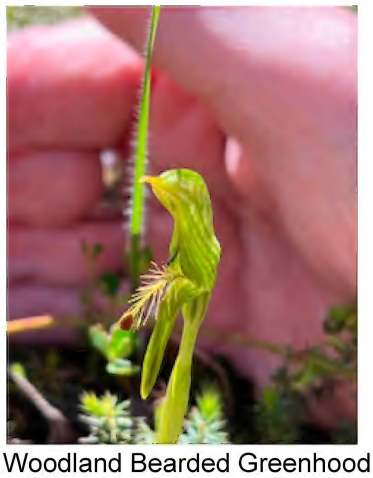
Photo Observations

Leonie Postle Seen along Smiths Reef track near Maldon 13 October

Milkmaids
Burchardia umbellata



Purple Beard-orchid
Calochilus robertsonii



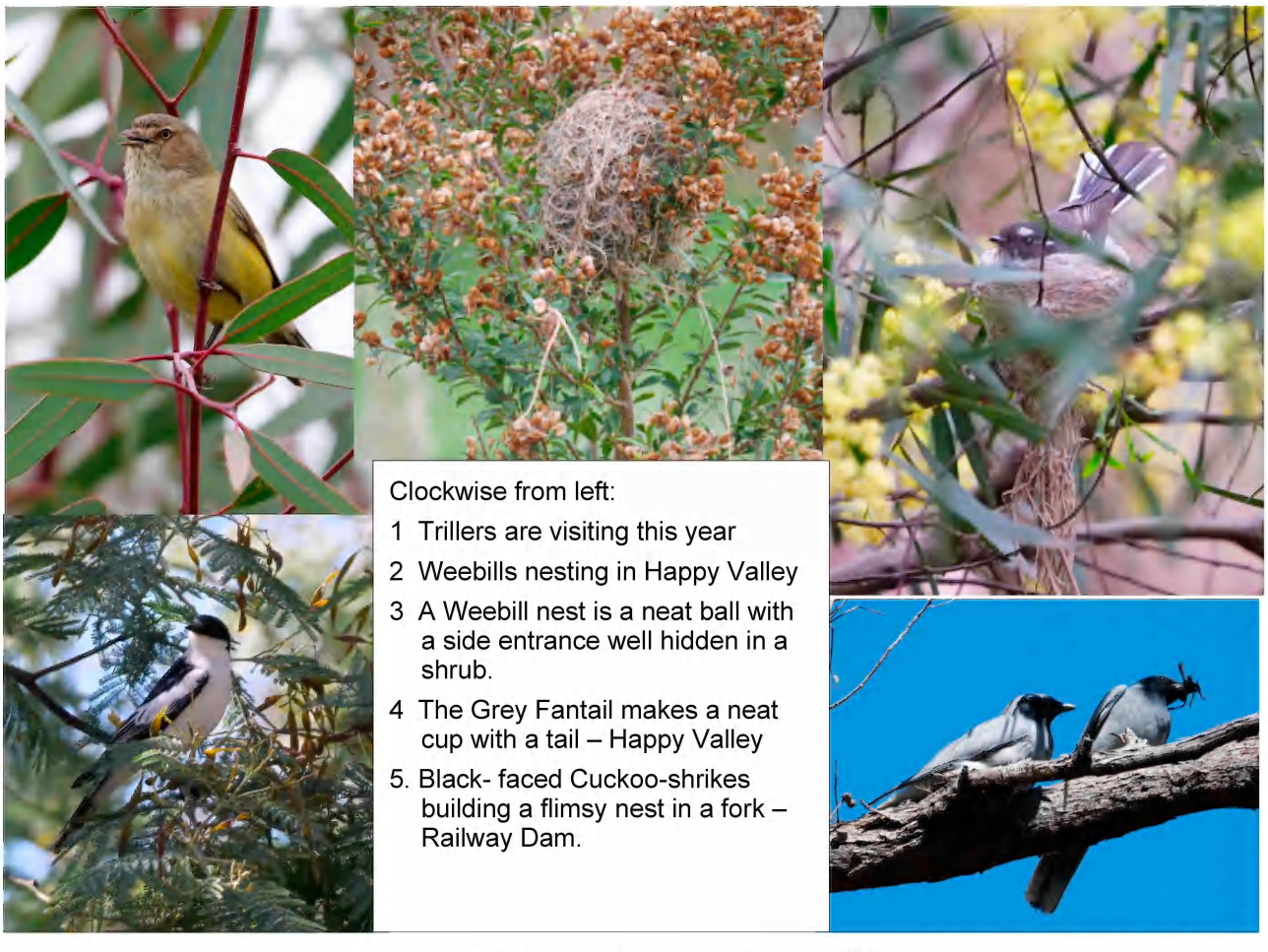
Woodland Bearded Greenhood
Pterostylis plumosa

Jill Williams On our dam at Shepherds Flat

Australian Emperor - *Anax papuensis*

Tau Emerald - *Hemicordulia tau*

Noel Young - some recent bird nesting activity.



Clockwise from left:

1 Trillers are visiting this year

2 Weebills nesting in Happy Valley

3 A Weebill nest is a neat ball with a side entrance well hidden in a shrub.

4 The Grey Fantail makes a neat cup with a tail – Happy Valley

5. Black- faced Cuckoo-shrikes building a flimsy nest in a fork – Railway Dam.

A note from this month's editor

With the extra spring activity this year there has been an overwhelming amount of material submitted making it necessary to limit the number of photos, and even hold over a couple of articles for next month. Apologies to those left out.

Secondly, with this issue we have increased the file size of the newsletter in order to produce sharper photos. I hope this does not inconvenience anyone. [Ed]

COMING EVENTS

Monthly Meeting: Friday 8th November, 7.30pm, Uniting Church Chapel, Lyttleton St.

Speaker: Brian Bainbridge (Biodiversity Officer, Hepburn Shire Council), "Habitat restoration for the Bright-eyed Brown".

Some recent ecological restoration projects in Hepburn Shire have demonstrated the value of 'assisted natural regeneration' and the benefits of leaving time to observe and work with a site's natural resilience. A butterfly, the Bright-eyed Brown (*Heteronympha cordace ssp. cordace*) is emerging as a local flagship for this approach to restoration. Its story also interweaves the themes of climate change adaptation, habitat connectivity and the conservation of wetlands.

Excursion: Saturday 9th November, 1.00pm.
"Trentham area - Habitat restoration for the Bright-eyed Brown"

Leader: Brian Bainbridge (Biodiversity Officer, Hepburn Shire Council)

What are the habitat features that aid survival of the rare Bright-eyed Brown Butterfly? Brian will take us on a walking tour to inspect some sites around Trentham where habitat restoration has been carried out to support this special butterfly. We will then drive to Lyonville and follow the Domino trail east for about 700m to inspect the upper Coliban River where the Butterfly has been observed in a high quality remnant site - giving us a reference for habitat restoration (too early for BEB but Cyril's Brown can be seen along the trail here).

Meet: for car pooling and **1.00pm** departure from the northern end of the Car Park north of the Railway Goods Shed, Kennedy St. Castlemaine **OR 2.00pm** Bath St, near the corner with Albert St, Trentham. Parking may be available at the new 'Mechanics' community hall. Shops and cafes are close by if people want to get there earlier for lunch.

Bring: Water, snacks, **clean** sturdy shoes, chairs and afternoon tea.

The Field Trip will be cancelled in extreme weather conditions.

Roadside Clean-up: Monday 11th November, 9am

Help keep our stretch of the Pyrenees Highway clean!

Come along and help do our bit for the community. More hands, quicker work. And you never know what treasure you might find!

Meet: 9am near Tait's Decorative Iron, corner of Willy Milly Rd and Pyrenees Highway, Castlemaine.

Bring: Gloves, water, sturdy footwear. Garbage bags and safety vests supplied.

Contact: Geoff Harris (mob 0418 392 183) if you can help with the clean-up.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the club

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club

PROGRAM

See "Coming Events" page for more details about November events.

Fri 8th Nov. Meeting 7.30pm Uniting Church **Chapel**.
Speaker: Brian Bainbridge (Biodiversity Officer, Hepburn Shire Council), "Habitat restoration for the Bright-eyed Brown".

Sat 9th Nov. Excursion 1.00pm.
Leader: Brian Bainbridge "Trentham area **-** Habitat restoration for the Bright-eyed Brown"

Mon 11th Nov 9am. Roadside clean-up.

Sat 30th Nov – Sun 1st Dec. Challenge Bird Count – see details in this newsletter.

Fri 13th Dec, Members' night 7.30pm. Uniting Church Hall. A chance to share your nature highlights from the year!

Tues 17th Dec, Picnic, Castlemaine Botanical Gardens, **5pm** onwards.

Visitors are welcome at club activities

Castlemaine Naturalist - email newsletter material to: newsletter.cfnc@gmail.com

*Deadline for the December edition is 29th of November.

Subscriptions for 2024 (Membership forms on CFNC website, fees due by 1st April)
Ordinary membership: Single $35, Family $50
Pensioner or student: Single $25, Family $30
Subscription includes the monthly newsletter, Castlemaine Naturalist

Committee

President:	Euan Moore (0407 519 091)
Vice President:	Vacant
Secretary:	Cathrine Harboe-Ree
Treasurer:	Geoff Harris
Committee:	Lou Citroen, Jenny Rolland, Peter Turner, Jill Williams, Noel Young
Newsletter editors:	Noel Young, Jenny Rolland, Jill Williams
Program coordinator:	Jenny Rolland

Newsletter Distributor: Geraldine Harris **Webmaster:** Ron Wescott

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club Inc. #A0003010B
Website: https://castlemainefieldnaturalists.org.au
Club email: castlemainefnc@hotmail.com
PO Box 324, Castlemaine, 3450